



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Karen Meyers & Alexa Carey
Onboard NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV
August 14 – September 1, 2006

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Karen Meyers

NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV

Mission: Eco-Monitoring

Day 15 August 28, 2006

Gulf of Maine

Weather Data from Bridge

Visibility: <1 nautical mile

Wind direction: 116°

Wind speed: 15 kts

Sea wave height: 1'

Swell wave height: 2-3'

Seawater temperature: 13.8 C

Sea Level Pressure: 1015.6 mb

Cloud cover: 8/8

Science and Technology Log

This is the first rainy day we've had. It's pretty chilly as well and not all that pleasant working on deck so we were delighted when the "kids" watch came on (our watch is known as the "geezer" watch) and got us out of doing an EPA station. I can't imagine doing this in January. It's a great day to stay indoors which is what I've been doing as much as possible – working on lesson plans and the Power Point on this trip, and reading. I did help Jerry do a collection for a WHOI scientist who is looking at the bacterium that causes Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning. That involved filtering 2 L of seawater through progressively smaller filters and then washing the filtrate off the finest filter into a bottle of medium in which the bacterium, *Pseudo-nitzschia*, will grow.

I had some nice conversations with crewmembers today. Chief Boatswain Tony Vieira came from Portugal with his family at the age of 17. After working construction for a few years, he began commercial fishing with his brother and fished for 18 years. Ten years ago he was happy to give up that difficult and dangerous profession to work for NOAA. Although he plans to retire before long, Tony says he won't want to stay away from the ocean for long and will probably look for opportunities to fill in on ships now and then.

We pulled up a heteropod with the bongos (not exactly in them) yesterday or the day before. It's a gastropod that's modified for a planktonic existence. Unfortunately, it was somewhat mangled so we didn't get a complete picture of what one looks like. It would be wonderful to see some of these animals in their natural element.

Personal Log – Alexa Carey (Aug 28th)

“Alexa, call the bridge.” I froze for a second as if I had just been called to the principal’s office. Going to a phone, ENS Chris Skapin told me he had a project for me and I was to carry a very large box to the bridge. As Wes and I scrambled to find a very large box, we speculated the many different activities I was about to be a part of. As soon as I walked in, the men talked in unusually quiet whispers. After several minutes, I figured out why. Acting XO Jason Appler had made quick friends with a small bird fluttering around the bridge. A sigh of relief came from me as we hunted down the small creature. After attempting to feed and give water to the small bird, he was let free. Unfortunately, as Mike Conway pointed out, few birds that are not adapted to sea-life can survive so far out to sea.

I finally got up to the bridge. Kurt showed me how everything works, radar and all the other navigation programs. All the crew told me that if I want to see some sort of marine life, to go up to the bridge when XO Jason Appler is there. About ten minutes after I was up on the bridge with Skapin and Appler, we saw a humpback whale come completely out of the water. There was a huge pod swimming about 100 m away.

Jerry added another station to break up our steam time; we had had one six-hour steam which we were all looking forward to. It seems like we might be getting in earlier than I expected, maybe now I’ll have extra time to hang out with Tracy and Alicea before we all have to leave. I can’t believe my three weeks are almost over!

Personal Log – Karen Meyers

I don’t think I’ve spent so many days without a to-do list in years. I can see some of the appeal of the mariner’s life. Things are a bit simpler out here.